

The Position of Postal Inspector

The Inspection Service of the U.S. Postal Service is a Federal law enforcement agency whose history dates back to the earliest days of our country. It has jurisdiction in all criminal matters infringing on the integrity and security of the mail and is responsible for the protection of all postal personnel, valuables and property. The Inspection Service also conducts audits in the Postal Service to insure the stability of financial operations, to control costs, and to promote increased efficiency.

The Inspection Service is a highly specialized, professional organization performing the security, investigative, law enforcement, and audit functions necessary to fulfill its three basic responsibilities:

1. The investigation of all violations of some 85 Federal statutes relating to the Postal Service;
2. The protection of mail, postal personnel, funds and property;
3. The internal audit of all Postal Service financial and nonfinancial operations.

Duties of Postal Inspectors are varied and are divided into three broad categories:

1. *Criminal Investigations.* Postal Inspectors are involved in the prevention and detection of all types of postal offenses, including criminal acts against the mails, postal facilities, postal personnel, and criminal misuse of the postal system. Such crimes include burglaries, robberies, mail fraud, theft, and sending of prohibited items through the mail such as narcotics,

pornography, and explosives. Possessing statutory power of arrest, Inspectors apprehend violators of the law and work closely with U.S. Attorneys in prosecuting cases.

2. Audit Investigations. Postal Inspectors conduct investigations to determine whether postal revenues are being properly protected, budgeted funds are expended economically, and the Postal Service is operated in conformance with postal operating laws and regulations and in the best interest of the public. Inspectors are expected to conduct comprehensive and objective audits which result in recommendations for improvements, cost reduction, and maximum managerial effectiveness in such areas as mail handling, data systems, customer service, financial operations, and outside procurements and contracts.

3. Security/Administrative. These duties of Inspectors include personnel security investigations; developing and maintaining security systems; security surveys; responding to catastrophes such as floods, fires, and wrecks; and working with the uniformed force of Postal Police Officers.

The work of Inspectors is exacting, requiring frequent travel and absences from home. Relocations are contemplated as part of normal career progression for Inspectors. Mobility is a condition of employment.

The geographic assignment of Postal Inspectors is dependent upon the needs of the Service, and reassignments involving transfers may occur at any point in an Inspector's career.

Initially, new Inspectors are separated from their families for three months while attending training classes in Potomac, Maryland, a suburb of Washington, D.C.

At the end of this training, they may be required to relocate to a geographic area other than the one in which their current residence is located.

Depending on the needs of the Service, Inspectors are normally reassigned after two to four years to a major metropolitan city, where opportunities exist for promotion to specialized assignments. After five years of service as a specialist in a major metropolitan area, they may request transfer to a metropolitan area of their choice. Such requests are accommodated as vacancies occur. Again, this typical progression may vary between individuals, and transfers may be initiated by management at any time according to the needs of the Service.

While the work is arduous, the position offers many opportunities for able men and women which more than compensate for the difficulties encountered. With the acceptance of the basic requirements, appointees to the position of Postal Inspector can look forward to an interesting career and exceptional opportunities for personal advancement and useful public service.

Education and Work Experience

Appointment to the position of Postal Inspector is highly competitive. Applicants currently being placed on the Postal Inspector Eligibility Register possess at least a four-year degree from an accredited college or university. Although applicants with degrees in various disciplines are being appointed, particular emphasis is directed toward identifying applicants with degrees and/or work experience in disciplines which directly relate to the work of Postal Inspectors, such as accounting, law, and computer science (programming and systems analysis). Also sought is work

experience in the Postal Service and responsible criminal, general investigative, or audit experience demonstrating:

1. The ability to exercise tact, initiative, ingenuity, resourcefulness, and judgment in the handling of investigative matters,

2. The ability to make oral or written reports and presentations, and

3. The ability to analyze and evaluate information or evidence and arrive at sound conclusions.

General Qualifications

Age. Applicants must be at least 21 years and less than 35 years of age.

Vision. Applicants must have uncorrected vision of not less than 20/200 (Snellen) in each eye, correctable to 20/20 in one eye and 20/40 in the other eye. Normal color vision is required. Applicants must pass either the Ishihara Pseudo-Isochromatic Plates, the Holmgren Yarn Test, or the Williams-Lanter Test.

Hearing. Applicants must be able to hear ordinary conversation at a distance of 15 feet with each ear without the use of an aid.

General Physical Condition. Applicants must be in good physical condition, which is ascertained through a rigid physical examination, and must possess emotional and mental stability. Physical examinations are periodically required during employment. Applicants must be able to drive a motor vehicle and must possess a valid driver's license.

Salary and Other Benefits

Salary. Candidates enter at a salary level of EAS-17. Postal Inspectors remain in that level for one year and are then eligible for promotion to EAS-19. Inspectors remain in

level 19 for 18 months and are then eligible for promotion to the journey level, EAS-21. Salary increases during the training phase are conditional upon successful completion of each phase during the 2½ years required to reach level 21. Once level EAS-21 is reached, future promotions are based upon merit and the availability of higher level positions.

Retirement. Inspectors are eligible for retirement under the law enforcement provisions of the U.S. Civil Service Retirement Act (5 U.S.C. 8336(c)). Therefore, Inspectors may retire after 20 years of investigative work with a minimum age of 50.

Annual (Personal) Leave. Based on years of Federal service:

Less than 3 years13 days per year
3-15 years20 days per year
Over 15 years26 days per year

Sick Leave. 13 days per year which may accumulate indefinitely.

Paid Holidays. 9 per year.

Relocation-Travel Expenses. Inspectors are reimbursed for necessary expenses incident to official travel. When Inspectors are moved from one duty station to another for the good of the Service, they are reimbursed for the expense of transporting their immediate family, household goods, and personal effects. Additional relocation expenses are granted in accordance with existing law, including reimbursement for many of the costs incident to the sale and purchase of residence.

Insurance. Liberal health and life insurance programs are available at a moderate cost.

Application Procedure

Application forms may be obtained from any Inspector in Charge. Local post offices can furnish the address. Applications will be screened for accuracy and completeness of information, history and quality of prior work experience, education, arrest and conviction record, and other such factors deemed pertinent to the qualification standards. When an applicant's qualifications are competitive with those of other applicants currently under consideration, a background investigation is initiated to determine the applicant's suitability for the position. After successful completion of the background investigation, qualified applicants are placed on the Postal Inspector Eligibility Register. Placement on the Register is not a guarantee of appointment. Priority for appointment consideration is determined from the written examination, education, background investigation, level and quality of general and specialized experience and veteran's preference.

Political Endorsements Prohibited

The Law (Title 39, United States Code, Section 1002) prohibits political and certain other recommendations for appointments, promotions, assignments, transfers or designations of persons in the Postal Service.

Statements relating solely to character and residence are permitted, but every other kind of statement or recommendation is prohibited unless it either:

- a. Is requested by the Postal Service and consists solely of an evaluation of the work performance, ability, aptitude and general qualifications of an individual or,
- b. Is requested by a government representative investigating the individual's loyalty, suitability, and character.

Anyone who requests or solicits a prohibited statement or recommendation is subject to disqualification from the Postal Service and anyone in the Postal Service who accepts such a statement may be suspended or removed from office.